

BIG BROTHER INTERNET--Nameless & Faceless in Cyberspace

by Sherman H. Skolnick

Many feel Internet is a great blessing. Outspoken activists can set up their own homepage or website and mouth off, while muttering to themselves, "To hell with the news networks!" Electronic mail goes up and back like in a flash [or does it? Read on.]

Politically incorrect commentators, once kept in the shadows, can now be read worldwide. With video streaming on Internet soon to blossom, they may be heard and SEEN worldwide. Feel-good types chirp, "The genie is out of the bottle" [Or is it?]

Cynics darkly sneer, "Don't you understand, America's bulb is getting brighter just as it is about to blow out, Hitler-style."

Are old-timers the only ones who remember the bad old days? During the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the FBI was in active opposition to them. Supposedly forbidden by statute to do domestic operations, the American CIA nevertheless had their domestic units doing dirty tricks on U.S. citizens. The CIA's excuse? They did it upon the default or neglect of the incompetent FBI. Maybe the FBI, as America's secret political police, was just too busy framing up labor activists and union organizers on charges of plotting bombings and other violence against corporate dictators.

In the 1970s, an official of the CIA admitted to a Congressional committee, that the spy agency had for many years been screening U.S. Mail and telegraph transmissions to overseas locations. Somehow, they never brought themselves to admit, even to Congress, that they had been spying as well on mail and other communications WITHIN THE U.S.

Now if you post something really too hot about the secret police on your homepage or website, the FBI, WITHOUT A COURT ORDER, reserves the right to shut off your transmissions.

First Class Mail, domestically, was supposedly by regulation, sacrosanct. A top-level U.S. Postal Inspector once bent my ear with his off-the-record, candid complaint, "We believe dope is being sent into Chicago in First Class packages. By regulation, we cannot open First Class packages unless we have definite prior proof of illicit shipment." He was talking to ME, not George Orwell, author of "1984", the epic book on the total police state. I could have countered the postal inspector by mentioning the major dope enters the U.S. with the blessings of the highly corrupt DEA and for espionage purposes of the American CIA.

[On our Cable TV Show, we talked about the dope warehouse in Chicago where it is piled up like so many bags of produce. Every six weeks, we said, the dope comes in on a sizeable truck escorted by corrupt local police. We decided not to give the exact address, for fear the place would be bombed and innocent people injured. A week after

our cablecast, a similar warehouse, much smaller, was identified in the monopoly press.]

Who bothers to tell you, the one for years having the monopoly on domain registration for websites, Network Solutions, Inc., is a sinister creature of the intelligence agencies. I am probably not the only one who can finger them from personal experience. All during the U.S. War against Serbia and their province of Kosovo, spring of 1999, Network Solutions blocked my website. Network Solutions' phone was constantly on busy signal. They failed to respond to my many complaints by E-mail. They even failed to respond to my complaints sent to their headquarters by Registered Mail, Return Receipt Requested, via U.S. Postal Service.

Did someone give Network Solutions a list of loudmouths to be censored? Were YOU on their list? Some say Internet is like fire-ants. Texans know, you can pour lighted fuel on fire-ants, yet they continue to march on. [At least that is what some Texans have told me.]

Most have become so accustomed to Electronic Mail, E-Mail for short, they even use it from their office for personal notes, on their bosses' machinery. Some have been fired for cause, based on company secrets and other inappropriate communications sent, accidentally or otherwise, as personal notes to pals. Retrieved from the system by an employer, the E-Mail becomes a document of accusation. Many employees have long known the company phones are bugged by the boss. So why would anyone expect the E-Mail was exempt?

Something seems to happen when you send E-Mail with something REALLY HOT, politically or spy-wise. In July, 1999, following the death of John F. Kennedy, Jr., I sought to post what we understood was the FBI's secret preliminary report on the air crash, showing an explosive device blew off the tail of the plane, making it a death warrant.[The how, when, and why is in our four part series, What Happened to America's Golden Boy: www.skolnicksreport.com] My E-Mail transmissions took four days on our REALLY HOT, Part Four story. To be certain, I sent some twice. Friends told me both E-Mails arrived at the same time, four days after the date I sent them. I sent the same E-Mails to myself. Same result. U.S. Postal Service, called snail-mail in current lingo, would most likely have arrived sooner, and supposedly not been screened or spy-tampered.

I once got on the line with the Technical Support of my Internet Service Provider. The one answering was quite polite and seemed well-informed. They might give their first name, rare, if ever, their last name. So whatever is said, they remain NAMELESS AND FACELESS, typical of the government bureaucracy, many large corporate offices, public utilities, and such. I outlined the problem of politically really HOT E-Mails of mine delayed for several days.

"As your server, we don't screen E-Mail," she tried to assure me. But then she added, "On the other hand, our server, I believe, does screen". She outlined to me how her company, as my server, had THEIR own server. She was not sure if THEY had a phone number where you could call them. Just to perform my sarcastic test, I asked Directory

Assistance for the 800 number of "Big Brother Internet". "One moment sir" and then came the answer, "I show no listing". I then asked Directory Assistance with the same name for Virginia. "Where in Virginia?" she asked. "McLean, Virginia" I answered. "You know, operator, under the listing [if any] for U.S. Central Intelligence Agency". The office of Network Solutions, Inc., I smiled to myself, was not far away. [Do they want Directory Assistance operators to have a sense of humor or recognize sarcasm?]

America On Line, AOL, has plenty I think they do not tell you. They are NOT an Internet Service Provider, ISP, but an online service, sort of a middle man TO AN ISP. That technical or lawful difference reportedly justifies them having a screening or censorship committee. In other words, a NAMELESS, FACELESS CENSORSHIP BOARD. Who are THEY? Under WHAT circumstances do THEY reserve the right or "authority" to block your postings and transmissions? What, if any, is your remedy or recourse? Are they, what is known in public utility and other law, as a Common Carrier, or are they a different animal?

Supposing the U.S. has a very serious decline, even a collapse, in the stock and other markets. And suppose as well that at such a time, there is a run on banks. Would the various Internet Service Providers and the Online Services function as before? Or would they obey a secret government directive to silence loudmouths by blocking their E-Mail and other transmissions? On the one hand, Internet, and the World Wide Web, and E-Mail, seem to be a great blessing, countering censorship. On the other hand, great numbers of folks have become overly dependent on the electronic communication. Thus created is a dilemma.

With the phone company, you have a choice to be listed or unlisted. With Internet, there are services that purport to be directory listings. Whether your website and such is listed there, is a matter of political consideration and quite arbitrary. Under state regulations, you would have a remedy, of sorts, against the phone company for refusing to list your phone in their regular directory. What remedy or recourse do you have NOW against these other "directories" that somehow fail to list you? Can you actually reach a real PERSON at these electronic directories, to express your complaint at not being listed?

Some radio talk shows are also available, by audio streaming, on Internet, either live or can be retrieved at any time later. AND, some radio talk shows, on Internet, if they get on a REALLY HOT topic, suddenly are blanked out. By whom? Under what lawful regulations are they censored?

So, on the one hand, Internet has been a blessing. On the other hand, it is also part of NAMELESS, FACELESS BIG BROTHER IN CYBERSPACE.

If this takes four days to get to you, or never arrives at all---Well, it is just Big Brother Internet doing his thing. Stay tuned.